THE TRUE INTEREST OF NATIONS,

Impartially Stated:

IN A

SERMON

PREACHED

At the Lent Assizes at *Chelmesford* in *Essex*, March 2*d*. 169$\frac{0}{1}$.

PROVING,

That the Promoting *universal Righteousness*, *Piety*, *Justice*, and *Honesty*, is the sure Means to exalt a Nation, its Inhabitants, and Government, in *Honour*, *Safety*, and *Prosperity*.

By *ANTHONY WALKER*, D.D.

Ezech. 3, 19. *If thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his Wickedness, nor from his wicked Way, he shall die in his Iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy Soul.*

Verse 2. *If thou warn the Righteous, that the Righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live; because he is warned: Also thou hast delivered thy Soul.*

London, Printed for *Nathanael Ranew*, at the *King's-Arms* in S. *Paul's* Church-Yard, 1691.

BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

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Impartially Stated:

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PREACHED

At the Lent Assizes at Chelmsford in Essex, March 24. 1691.

BY

ANTHONY PALKER, D.D.

London, Printed for Nathanael Ranew, at the Ang. & Acorn in S. Paul's Church-Yard, 1691.

TO THE

Right Honourable

Sir *Henry Pollixfen*, Lord Chief Juſtice of the *Common-Pleas*, and Sir *Nicholas Letchmere*, one of the Barons of the *Exchequer*, Judges of Aſſize for the home-Circuit.

And the Honourable Collonel *J. Cook* of *Chiſſel*, High Sheriff for the County of *Eſſex*.

Much, and moſt deſervedly, Honoured,

HOW ſtale and ſuſpected ſoever the Pretence be, of extorting Importunity to inforce it, as an Excuſe of appearing in Print; yet no Man of Senſe, nay, Prejudice it ſelf, than which nothing is more ſenſeleſs, can judge me ſo far loſt, to all Sentiments of Truth, Modeſty, and common Prudence, as to appeal

to such unexceptionable Witnesses in a Case that would not bear it.

The Truth is, I was with so much Reluctancy brought to let this Sermon see more Light, which unavoidable late going to Church, forc'd me to deliver in the Dark, that I rather need to beg Pardon for it.

But when I had, almost to Rudeness, withstood Requests, a Person of Quality turned intreating into arguing, and inforc'd some Passages in the Sermon, with which he judged my Denials not well to consist; then, as the Eagle, pierced with an Arrow feathered from its own Wing, my obstinacy was vanquished by my own Weapons; and with unwilling Willingness, I yielded to run the Risk of its losing by the Eye, what it had beyond expectation gain'd by the Ear.

I heartily bless God, that I have liv'd to see Judges in England, *who cannot only bear, but approve such honest plain preaching, and*

desire

desire it may be made publick, with hope that it will do some Service to the Nation.

And if I may touch so small a thing, (for I cannot own it needs Apology,) my citing so many Scriptures, I suspect, will be styled Nimiam Diligentiam, *and but a solemn trifling: Be it so; yet I did not run into this right-hand Error blindfold. Had my business been only with Men's Ears and Fancies, I should have used other Tools: But having to do with their Hearts and Consciences, and to cut down Sin, and build up Righteousness, I knew nothing so fit for my Purpose, as the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, which is quick and powerful, and the only Weapon fit to pull down the strong Holds of Sin and Satan. God will be God, whether Sinners will or no; and his Word will retain an Awe upon Men's Minds, how unmodish soever it seem to urge so much of it; and will be a golden Sceptre to convince and rule, or else a Rod of Iron to condemn and to break in pieces.*

And

And here I present it to your Honours, and the unprejudiced honest Readers, and if it may prove useful to the Publick, and acceptable to Men of such a Character, it shall suffice; (for a Plea for Righteousness cannot be over-welcome to unrighteous Men till it convince them to forsake it;) and though it should fall more short of Acceptance from the Press, than it exceeded my Hopes from the Pulpit, I shall rest satisfy'd in this Act of Obedience to my Betters, and Kindness to my Equals; and shall study to approve my self more readily

March 16. 1691. Your Honours most Humble,

and most Obedient Servant.

A. Walker.

A SERMON PREACHED

At the Assizes held at *Chelmsford*, March the 2d 1691.

Proverbs 14. 34.

Righteousness exalteth a Nation: But Sin is a Reproach to any People.

THough these Words have no Dependence on the Context, nor Coherence with it; yet they have a secret Aspect on, and a tacit Regard to a supposed Truth, which is the Basis on which they are built, and the hidden Source and Spring, from whence they flow and issue; to wit,

That Noble Principle which Nature hath impressed on Mankind, with Characters as legible, as indelible; viz. That every man should, and every wise and good man will

will desire and endeavour to promote the *Honour*, *Safety*, and *Welfare* of his Native Countrey, the Nation of which he is a Member: For,

As the *first* and greatest Law of Nature is, to *love our selves*, to preserve our Being, and to advance our own Well-being, the *second* is like unto it; to *love our Countrey*, and promote its Happiness; and *for our Brethren, and Companions sake, to seek its good*, Psal. 122. 8, 9.

And this being supposed as a *Suffratum*, the Text directs the Method, and the Means, in and by which that End may be attained, viz. by following after *Righteousness*, and avoiding, preventing, and suppressing *Sin* to the utmost of our power, both in our selves and others; for *Righteousness exalts a Nation; but Sin is a Reproach to any People.*

Which *Divine Aphorism* contains an excellent and infallible *Receipt*, and *Direction*, for the *Health* of the Body *Politick*; prescribed by the ablest and the wisest *State-Physician*, who acceptably *begg'd*, and successfully *obtain'd* his Skill from God himself, 1 *Kings* 3. 9, 10, 11.

And to render it as intelligible and practicable, and my Discourse upon it as suitable and seasonable as I can, to the present Occasion; I will

First, Set the Parts of the Text in their due Order.

Secondly, Explain them briefly in that Order.

Thirdly, Set before you a Proposition, resulting from that Explication, comprehending the Scope and Meaning of them.

I. In the Text are evidently *Three Parts.*

I. An *Subject*, about which somewhat is affirmed: *A Nation; Any People.*

II. Two very different *Causes*, affecting and influencing the Subject; *Righteousness, Sin.*

III. The *Effects* produced by these Causes; *Exaltation, Reproach.*

Which

Which are as contrary to each other, as were the Cauſes from which they do proceed; ſo that there is an evident *Antitheſis*, or Oppoſition between the two entire Sentences, and every Word in either of them.

And as Contraries *ſet by* one another, *ſet off* and illuſtrate one the other, the *Text* carries its own Commentary with it, and might help to explain it ſelf.

But I will wave, and deny my ſelf that advantage; and to husband Time, confine my ſelf to the former Branch; *Righteouſneſs exalts a Nation*: Every Word of which, without Wreſting, or offering the leaſt Violence to them, may bear a Threefold Signification.

Firſt, The *Subject*, *Nation*, may ſignifie, 1. The Countrey, or Place inhabited: As, *Take away our Place and Nation*, John 11. 48.

2. The *People* inhabiting in ſuch a Place: *O People, Nations, Languages*, Dan. 3. 4. Acts 2. 5. But this is ſo common, it needs no Proof; and the very Text expounds it; making *any People* in the *latter Branch*, parallel to *Nation*, in the *former*.

3. The *Government*, and *Polity*, by which ſuch a People are governed in ſuch a Country, defended from their Enemies, ſecur'd in their Rights, reſtrain'd from doing ill, encourag'd to do well, by Wiſe and Righteous Laws, and juſt Execution of them, by Rewards and Puniſhments: For, if *Houſe* may be put for the *Maſter* of it; as, *Luke* 19. 9. *This day is Salvation come to this Houſe, i. e.* to *Zacheus*; as I find it expounded: And *Church*, for the ruling Part in the Church, *Matth.* 18. 17. *Tell it to the Church.* 'Tis not leſs proper to expound *Nation*, for the *Government* of a Nation.

Secondly, The *Cauſe*, *Righteouſneſs*, with reſpect to Nations, may be conſidered as Threefold; (for *Evangelical Righteouſneſs* reſpects *Perſons ſingly*, not *Nations complexly*,) which we may call *Religious*, *Civil*, *Moral Righteouſneſs*.

Religious Righteousness is *Godliness* or *Piety*; which gives to God the Worship and Service he expects; *The Glory due unto his Name*, Psal. 29. Which is the Scope of the first Table.

2. *Civil, Legal, Political Righteousness*, which is *Justice* and *Equity*, consisting in due *Administration* of *Judgment*, by just distribution of Rewards and Punishments, according to the true Design and Intent of the *Wise* and *Righteous Laws* of every Nation and Society of Men, *defending* and *rewarding* those who observe and keep them; and *restraining* and *punishing* those who transgress and break them; that the *Administration* of *Justice* may be really the *Terror of evil doers, and to the Praise of them who do well*, Rom. 13.

3. *Moral Righteousness* is *Honesty* and *Probity*, fair and upright dealing by *private Persons*, betwixt Man and Man; the Source of which, is to *love our Neighbour as our selves*, Mat. 22. 39. And that Golden Rule of our Saviour, to *do to others, as we would they should do to us*, Luke 6. 31. And the whole amounts to *walking* (in all capacities) *with all good Conscience, void of offence towards God and Men*, Acts 24. 16.

Thirdly, The *Effect*, *Exalteth*: This also may imply Three Things; *Honour, Safety, Plenty*.

1. To *Exalt*, signifies to set up on high in Honour, Renown, and Fame; *To make thee high above all Nations which he hath made, in Praise, in Name, and Honour*, Deut. 26. 19. And the very Text intimates this, in opposing *Reproach*, to being *exalted*.

2. *Safety*. To be set on high, oft signifies to be placed out of the reach of Danger To *set him on high from him that puffeth at him*.

He shall dwell on high, his place of Defence shall be the Munition of Rocks, Isa. 33. 16. *He is my Shield, and my Salvation, my high Tower, and my Refuge, my Saviour, thou savest me from violence*, 2 Sam. 22. 3.

3. *Plenty*,

3. *Plenty*, and *Proſperity*; when it is with a Notion as *David* pray'd it might be with his, *Pſal.* 144. 13, 14, 15. *That our Sons may be as Plants grown up in their youth, our Daughters as Corner-Stones polished after the ſimilitude of a Palace: That our Garners may be full, affording all manner of Store: That our Sheep may bring forth Thouſands, and ten Thouſands in our Streets: That our Oxen may be ſtrong to labour: That there be no breaking in, nor going out; that there be no complaining in our Streets. Happy is the People that is in ſuch a caſe.* Happy, here, is conſignificant to being *exalted.*

And that enlarged Promiſe of exceeding Plenty, *Deut.* 28. 11, 12. *The Lord ſhall make thee plenteous in Goods, in the fruit of thy Body, — thy Cattel, — thy Ground. The Lord ſhall open to thee his good Treaſure.* — Ends thus, *v.* 13. *And the Lord ſhall make thee the Head, and not the Tail; and thou ſhalt be above only, and thou ſhalt not be beneath.* So that Plenty and Proſperity properly exalts in Scripture-Language and Account.

Thus from this genuine Explication of the Words, you may pleaſe to take a comprehenſive view of this excellent Text, and graſp the Strength and Subſtance of it into one Propoſition, *viz.*

That *Religion and Piety, Juſtice and Equity, Probity and Honeſty, exalt into Honour and Renown, Safety and Peace, Plenty and Proſperity, a Nation,* the *Land* in which they are found, the *People* by whom they are practiſed, the *Government* by which they are defended and promoted.

In the handling which Propoſition, I ſhall ſet theſe Limits and bounds to my Diſcourſe, as the Method and Meaſures of it.

1. To confirm its Truth, that they do it.

2. To ſhew the Seaſon and Circumſtances when they do it.

3. To demonstrate the Reasons why, or shew the Means by which they do it.

All which I shall pursue as distinctly as I can.

I begin with the first, to confirm this Truth, *viz.* that *Piety, Justice, Honesty*, exalt *Countries, People, Governments*, in *Honour, Safety, Plenty*.

There cannot be a more full and comprehensive Confirmation given of any Truth, than what may be drawn to confirm this, from *Deut.* 28. in the 14 first Verses, in all the Branches of it, which I must refer you to, being too long to transcribe and point at the Particulars.

When it goeth well with the Righteous, the City rejoiceth. By the Blessing of the Upright the City is exalted, Prov. 11. 10, 11. Religion and Justice, are like the two Pillars *Solomon* erected before the Porch of the Temple, *Jakin* and *Boaz*, Establishment and Strength, 1 *Kings* 7. 21.

Justice with Religion, as a Great Man hath observed, is the strong Foundation, and the steddy Prop of States and Kingdoms: Therefore good Men are as *Elisha* call'd *Elijah*, *The Chariots of Israel, and the Horsemen thereof*, 2 Kings 2. 12.

What a Blessing had ten righteous Men been to *Sodom*; for the sake of so small a number, God would not have destroyed them, *Gen.* 18. 32.

Peace is the Skin of a Nation; but *Religion* and *Justice* are its Soul and Spirits: The rubbing off the Skin may make it sore; but the loss of Soul and Spirits bring Death without Remedy.

Golden Christians are truly the Brazen Walls and Iron-Gates which secure Cities.

Wisdom, that is Goodness or Piety, in *Solomon*'s Stile, is better than Weapons of War, and strengthneth more than Ten (a number of Perfection; that is, very many) mighty Men that are in the City, *Eccl.* 7. 19.

But I shall confirm the Truth of this Sentence, *Righteousness exalts a Nation*, according to the more enlarged Sense of

of it, given in the Explication and Propoſition. By Arguments drawn from

1. God's Promiſes.
2. Obſervation and Experience.
3. The Aptitude and Tendency of ſuch Cauſes to produce ſuch Effects.

I begin with the Firſt, God hath made good Promiſes that it ſhall be ſo. The Text is expreſs, and ſpeaks in the preſent Tenſe; for greater aſſurance, it exalteth to prove, it ſhall ſo do. I at preſent take the Promiſes for granted, and ſhall by and by produce them, and on that Suppoſition argue.

They being made, ſhall be made good; or elſe, either God cannot do it, or he will not do it.

Not the firſt, for he is *Almighty: He can do all things*, Job. 42. 2. Nothing is too hard for him. *His Arm is not ſhortned, nor his Hand weakned*, Jer. 32. 27. *With God nothing ſhall be impoſſible*, Luke 1. 37. He made Heaven and Earth with a Word, and nothing can withſtand, or reſiſt his Power; he doth whatever he pleaſes in the *Armies of Heaven, and amongſt the Inhabitants of the Earth.*

Not the ſecond; for *he is faithful that hath promiſed*, Heb. 10. 23. They are the Promiſes of him that cannot lie, *Tit.* 1. 2. not only *will not*, but *cannot*; and may as ſoon ceaſe to be God, as to be true. *He is not a Man that he ſhould lie, or the Son of Man that he ſhould repent*, Numb. 23. 19. *Hath he ſaid it, and ſhall he not do it: Hath he ſpoken it, and ſhall he not make it good?* See 1 Sam. 15. 29.

Now the Promiſes are ſo many of this kind, *Inopem me copia fecit*, the abundance of them diſtracts my Choice: And indeed it is the ſcope and driſt of all the *Promiſes* to encourage *Righteouſneſs*, both Perſonal and National; and of the *Threatnings*, to *diſcourage* and reſtrain *Unrighteouſneſs*. See at leiſure, *Lev.* 26. *Deut.* 28.

But to touch a few: *He withdraweth not his Eyes from the Righteous; yea he eſtabliſheth them for ever, and they are exalted*, Job. 36. 7.

He

He shall judge the People with Righteousness, and the Poor with Judgment; then, the Mountains shall bring Peace, a comprehensive word for all Prosperity, *and the little Hills by Righteousness*, Psal. 72. 2, 3.

Righteousness and Peace kiss each other, as is said of *Melchisedec* King of *Salem*; first *King of Righteousness*, then *King of Peace*, Heb. 7. 2. Righteous Kings shall inherit Peace to themselves and People; *for the Throne is established by Righteousness*, Prov. 16. 12. to them that sit upon it, and over whom it is set.

The Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my People shall dwell in peaceable Habitations, and in sure Dwellings, and in quiet resting Places, Isa. 32. 17, 18.

He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly, that despiseth the Gain of Oppression, and shaketh his Hands from holding of Bribes, and stoppeth his Ears from hearing of Blood, and shutteth his Eyes from seeing of Evil; he shall dwell on high, Isa. 33. 15.

See farther, *Jer.* 22. 3, 4: *Execute Judgment and Righteousness*: —— *For if you do this indeed; then shall there enter in by these Gates Kings sitting upon the Throne of David*, &c.

Secondly, Experience confirms the same, the most religious just, and vertuous Nations, have, generally speaking, been most flourishing; and the most righteous Governments the most renown'd and prosperous.

'Tis a good Observation of St. *Augustin*, That God gave that prosperous Success to the *Romans*, by which they obtained the Dominion of so great a part of the then known World, for their Justice, Fidelity, Temperance, and Chastity, and their Love and Practice of Moral Vertues, and punishing of Vice; in which they exceeded, and may justly rise up in Judgment against most Christian Nations; who, under so much clearer Light, and stricter Obligations, came so much short of them, Time would fail me to instance in particular Persons. How religiously tender were

were they of the Publick Faith; when * *Albanus* was rent in pieces, by four Chariots, for violating of it, when given to an Enemy.

* See *Aul. Gal. lib.* 20. *c.* 1. (Which I eſteem the moſt excellent Chapter in all his Book; containing a Vindication of the ſtrictneſs of the Roman Laws, and the impartial Execution of them, *Noct. Att. Tu diſtis* Albane *maneres.*

And be Men never ſo impatient to hear of it, 'twas thoſe that made the Reign of Q. *Elizabeth* ſo flouriſhing, and her Memory ſo dear to Engliſh-men.

And the ſacred Story, from the time of the *Jews* beginning to be a People, through all their Judges and Kings, till they ceas'd to be ſo; is a conſtant exemplification of this Truth, how Righteouſneſs ſet them up, and Unrighteouſneſs pull'd them down.

Shalt thou reign, becauſe thou incloſeſt thy ſelf in Cedar? Did not thy Father eat and drink, and do Judgment and Juſtice; and then it was well with him. He judged the Cauſe of the Poor and Needy; then it was well with him. Was not this to know me, ſaith the Lord? Jer. 22. 15, 16.

And 'tis a Method worthy of God, to proceed thus to make himſelf known; and to teach the ſtupid World this Leſſon, that the *Righteous Lord loveth Righteouſneſs*; but them who do Iniquity, and love Violence, his Soul hateth.

'Tis Righteouſneſs which keeps Deſtruction far off, or prevents it, when threatned and approaching. What ſav'd *Judah* and *Jehoſophat* from that mighty Hoſt, which came againſt them, but Faith, and Prayer, and Reformation? 2 *Chron.* 20.

What delivered *Jeruſalem* from *Senacharib*'s Hoſt, conſiſting of Hundreds of thouſands: but the Prayer of *Iſaiah* the Prophet, and *Hezekiah* the King, the Miniſters of Religion and Juſtice; yea, routed his Army in a Night, by an *Angel*, ſlaying 185000, *Iſa.* 37.

What ſav'd *Nineveh* from God's peremptory threatned Ruine within Forty days; *but their crying mightily to God; turning every one from his Evil*, and *ceaſing from the Violence that was in their Hands*, *Jonah* 3. 4. where we may

may eaſily take notice of all the Three Branches of *Righteouſneſs* in our *Propoſition.*

They *cried mightily to God*; there's *Piety*: They *ceaſed from the Violence of their Hands*; there's *Juſtice*: They *turned every one from the Evil of their Ways*, there's *Moral Honeſty*, or *Probity.*

3. This Truth may be confirm'd, from the relation there is between Cauſes, and their Effects. We eaſily believe the production of Effects, when we ſee Cauſes prepared, apt and fit to bring them forth; as, That things ſhall be burnt, when we ſee them caſt into the Fire; that Men's Hunger and Thirſt ſhall be ſatisfied and ſlaked, when we ſee them eat and drink what's wholeſome in both kinds.

Now Piety, Equity, Honeſty, are Cauſes, as fit to bring forth Honour, Safety, and Proſperity, as any Cauſes can be to produce their proper Effects: And that,

Firſt, With reſpect to God, the *Righteous Judge of all the Earth*; who will as certainly encourage and reward them, as puniſh the Contraries. Mark *Abraham*'s Plea for *Sodom*, Gen. 18. 25. *To ſlay the Righteous with the Wicked, and that the Righteous ſhould be as the Wicked, that be far from thee; ſhall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?*

And ſo *Abimelech* pleaded his Innocency for his Safety, *Gen.* 20. 4. *Wilt thou ſlay alſo a righteous Nation?*

The Righteous Lord loveth Righteouſneſs; and he will act ſo, that a *man*, any man that takes notice of his Providences, *ſhall ſay, doubtleſs there is a reward for the Righteous; doubtleſs there is a God that judgeth in the Earth*, Pſal. 58. 11. *Every man may ſee it, man may behold it afar off*, Job 36. 25. He that runs may read it.

I confeſs, as to particular Perſons, God's Proceedings with them, are not always ſo obvious; becauſe he hath another Place and Time to reckon with them, and reward them, and on purpoſe forbears preſent Payment: ſometimes to prove there is a future Judgment. But for Nations, as Nations, this is the proper Seaſon for Rewards, or Pu-

Puniſhments, the Nations of the World ceaſing to be Nations when the World ſhall ceaſe to be.

Secondly, With reſpect to the Things themſelves; they have an apt Tendency to produce ſuch Effects; they are as Seed which brings forth Fruit of its own kind: As Wheat bears Wheat; ſo Righteouſneſs bears Honour and Safety. As Grace is the Seed of Glory future to Perſons; ſo theſe Vertues are the Seed of Glory preſent to a Nation. *His Salvation is nigh to them that fear him, that Glory may dwell in our Land*, Pſal. 85. 9. *Light is ſown for the righteous, and Gladneſs for the upright in heart*, Pſal. 97. 11. Theſe *Light* and *Gladneſs* are comprehenſive Words, including all we ſpeak of to make a People happy; and as they are ſown for the Righteous; ſo Righteouſneſs is the Seed ſown, from whence they ſpring; *Glory to the Righteous*, was the Prophet's Song, *Iſa.* 24. 16.

We oft meet this Expreſſion, *tendeth to*——*Righteouſneſs tendeth to Life*, Prov. 10. 16.—11. 19. Religion and Juſtice, they have a propenſe Tendency to the production of theſe things; and we may thence conclude, they will infallibly produce them.

Theſe are thoſe Waters of the Sanctuary, which *heal all to which they flow, and give Life to every thing whither the River cometh*, Ezek. 47. 9.

2. When do they do it? In what Seaſon and Circumſtances?

I Anſwer; When Religion and Juſtice become National Vertues, are in Eſteem and Reputation, and 'tis Men's Intereſt to own and practiſe them.

As there is no Temptation greater, than for men to find, or think it their Intereſt to be wicked; for few eſcape that Snare: So no Conjuncture is happier, than when 'tis men's Intereſt to be good and vertuous; for that encourages many to be truly ſo, and invites more to appear ſuch; when a Nation exalts theſe, they will exalt that Nation. *Exalt her, and ſhe ſhall promote thee; ſhe ſhall bring thee to Honour,*

when thou doſt embrace her; ſhe ſhall give to thine Head an Ornament of Grace, a Crown of Glory ſhall ſhe deliver to thee, Prov. 4. 8, 9.

But ſome may farther ask, When may *Righteouſneſs* be eſteemed National, that we may expect and hope for theſe Effects from it?

To which, let me firſt ſay without offence, I heartily wiſh that we knew this ſo well by a guſty reliſhing, and ſweet experience; that it were needleſs to be taught it by dry, and more inſipid ſpeculations; and that we had not known it by its Contraries, more feelingly, than by it ſelf, and by the *Vexations wherewith God did vex us with Adverſity* for our unrighteouſneſs; as *Azariah* ſpake to *Aſa*, 2 Chron. 15. 6.

And Firſt, I'll tell you in a Word, when it will not do it; When it is diſcountenanced, look'd upon askew, with a ſuſpicious and a jealous Eye, reproach'd, ridicul'd, ſcorn'd, hated, perſecuted, that Men are made aſhamed and affraid to own it.

The Righteous God will not exalt that Nation which thus treats *Righteouſneſs*, unleſs for ſome little Time, *ut graviori lapſu ruant*; that the higher they are lift up, their Fall may be more conſpicuous to others, and more painful to themſelves.

But Secondly, *Religion* and *Juſtice* then become, and are to be eſteemed National;

1. When they are practiſed and encouraged by the Greateſt; whoſe ſpecial Province, and peculiar Duty it is to do it. Great is the influence of Example; but the Example of Great Men it of greateſt influence. The Court ſets the Faſhion, and is the Standard to City and Country, not only of Garbs, but Manners? For, as when a *Ruler hearkens to Lies, all his Servants are wicked*, Prov. 29. 12. So a *wiſe King, which ſits on the Throne of Judgment*, whoſe Throne is a Throne of Righteous Judgment, *ſcattereth all Evil with his Eyes, and bringeth the Wheel over the Wicked*, Prov. 20. 8, 26.

If

If a Sun of Righteouſneſs ſhine in that Orb, (give me leave to uſe that Phraſe in an inferiour, ſecondary Senſe,) he heals the Nations of their Impiety and Oppreſſion: But if it be eclipſed, or turned into Blood, thick Darkneſs covers all the Nation.

There ſhines the Moon, which governs the Tides of Vertue and Vice; and they riſe and fall, ebb and flow, as influenced thence.

'Tis almoſt conſtant in the Sacred Hiſtories, to give account of the *Jewiſh* Nation, as to Religion or Wickedneſs, according to the Diſpoſition of their Great Men. When the Great Men were *Rulers* of *Sodom*, the Inferiours are *People* of *Gomorrah*, Iſa. 1. 10.

2. When Piety and Honeſty, and Fidelity and Ability, are eſteemed the beſt Qualifications for publick Employment, and the next Steps to Preferment, and no diminiſhing Terms, are not a Bar, or Stainant Colours in a Man's Coat-Armour. Unrighteous Governments muſt have Tools ſuitable to their Deſigns and Work; and Honeſt Men will not do diſhoneſt Things; and therefore are not for their Turn, and 'tis well if they can ſcape with only being neglected. *Bonus Vir* Cujus Seius, *ſed Chriſtianus*: So ſuch and ſuch are Able Men, Honeſt Men; but they are too Preciſe, too Zealous, and Strait-lac'd.

'Tis the Ruine of Nations, when Ambitious Men court high Places, and are admitted to them for Favour, or for Money; for they that buy, muſt ſell; Firſt, Themſelves, to do wickedly: Next, The Righteous, and their Cauſe; becauſe they ſcorn to purchaſe what the Laws of God and Men had given them ſo juſt a Claim and Title to.

But happy the Land where *Jethro*'s Counſel is Canonical; to *place able Men, fearing God, Men of Truth, and hating Covetouſneſs, over the People*, Exod. 18. 21. *When the Righteous are in Authority, the People rejoyce*, ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 29. 2. And Reaſon good they ſhould; for then *Piety, Equity*, and *Probity* are like to be promoted.

3. When 'tis approved by most, and practised by many; good *Looks* and good *Company* are two great advantages to make Piety and Honesty thrive and spread: These are like the *Solum* and *Cælum* to a Plant; good Soil, and good Sun and Rain, fertile Earth, and kind Heaven; when 'tis not dash'd out of Countenance, with a wrinkled scowling Brow; nor forc'd into the Stable, as *Joseph* and the Blessed Virgin, when there was no room for them in the Inn, *Luk.* 2. 7. Or, like a speckled Bird, must fly into the Wilderness, because the Birds of the Forest are all against it, *Jer.* 12. 9. and constrain'd to sigh out *David*'s Option, *O that I had the Wings of a Dove, to fly away to be at rest*, Psal. 55. 6. Or to sit as a Sparrow alone upon the House-top; because in the opening of the Gates, and Concourse of the People, none will regard her.

How can Righteousness be counted National; when a Nation abhors it; and its own Mother's Children account it a Stranger and an Alien?

But when they, who *ask the way to Zion, with their Faces thitherward*, Jer. 50. 5. go, as the Tribes went to *Jerusalem*, in Troops, and with Musick; then weak Hands and feeble Knees, weary Legs and fainting Hearts, renew their Strength, and mount up as Eagles; and Religion spreads amain, like the Vine which God brought out of *Egypt*; which when his Hand planted, fill'd the Land, *Psal.* 80. 9.

4. When 'tis scorn'd by few, persecuted and suppress'd by none; then as the Gospel, when it hath a free Course, runs, and is glorified, 2 *Thes.* 3. 1. when the Stream of Righteousness hath no Dams in its Chanel, to obstruct its flowing, it will, like *Jordan*, in the time of Harvest, overflow its Banks, and water the Land, as *Nilus* doth *Egypt*, to make it fertile: When neither the Sword of the Mouth, nor the Mouth of the Sword are whet against it: When no Arrows of invenom'd bitter Words, dipp'd in the Poison of Asps, are shot against it: 'Tis not stigmatized, or branded with opprobious Names, which blast it as the burning East-

wind

wind nips the tender Buds; and when the Foot of Violence cannot approach to hurt it; but thoſe Dogs, who delight to worry, and to ſuck the Blood of the Lambs of Chriſt, are ſo muzzled or chain'd up; that, though they may grin and ſhow their Teeth, they cannot tear and rend them. But Men may be as good as they will, and the Grace of God excites and enables them to be; and the Voice of Providence ſay to them, even in this Life preſent, what Chriſt ſpoke, with relation to the Life to come: *Fear not little Flock*, Luke 12. 32. And what our Lord ſpake in a Viſion to *Paul*: *Be not affraid; but ſpeak, and hold not thy Peace; for I am with thee, and none ſhall ſet upon thee to hurt thee*, Acts 18. 9. 10. And Righteouſneſs obtains that Privilege, with which St. *Luke* concludes the Hiſtory of the *Acts*, in relation to St. *Paul*. *He received all that came into him, preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, with all Confidence, no Man forbidding him.* When the Children of God are not at the proud, and cruel Mercy of the Slaves of Satan; nor at the Will of them who hate them for their Father's ſake. When a Nation is an holy, ſafe, and quiet Habitation to righteous Men. When under *Kings, and thoſe in Authority, we may lead a quiet and peaceable Life, in all Godlineſs and Honeſty*, 1 Tim. 2. 2. as St. *Paul* directs us to pray; and as our own Liturgy excellently teacheth us, with Fervency, to beg for our King and Queen; That in all their Thoughts, Words, and Actions, they may ever ſeek God's Honour and Glory, and ſtudy to preſerve the People committed to their Charge, in Wealth, Peace, and Godlineſs. In ſuch a Seaſon, *Piety*, *Equity*, and *Honeſty*, are in a hopeful way to be exalted in a Nation; and then they will exalt that Country, People, Government, in Honour, Safety, Plenty; which was the ſecond Head of Diſcourſe, to ſhew when, or in what Circumſtances of Time it doth it.

I pro-

I proceed to the third Head to be diſcourſed on, *viz.*

To demonſtrate the Reaſons why, and ſhew the means by which, Piety, Equity, Probity, thus exalt a Nation. And though they are many, Time will allow me to inſiſt upon but few of them.

The firſt and principal is; becauſe they engage God to be God of ſuch a Nation, and to own them, and bleſs them as his People: To demonſtrate this, might ſuperſede the reſt as needleſs; or leave them but as Grains to be caſt into the Balance, which add but little to the main weight.

I may ſay of this, as the great Stateſman; who, being ask'd what was the wiſeſt, and ſafeſt way to govern a Kingdom, wrote in the top, the middle, and foot of the Page, *Moderation, Moderation, Moderation*: Or, as the Rhetorician; who was ask'd what was the chief Excellency of an Orator, reply'd, *Pronunciation, Pronunciation, Pronunciation.* So may we truly anſwer him, who asks what exalts a Nation, with redoubled Repetition, *God's Preſence with them*: This is the Firſt, the Second, and the Third; this is truly all in all.

'Twas a bold Motto that King us'd, *Cui adhæreo præeſt*, He prevails whoſe part I take.

But it is certainly ſo with thoſe, on whoſe ſide God vouchſafes to be, *Iſa.* 43. 5. *Fear not, for I am with thee*, is full Security.

If God be for us, who can be againſt us, Rom. 8. 31. Let who will; let who dare *kick againſt the Pricks*, they are like to have a hard Task, and they are ſure to be over-match'd.

The Lord is on my ſide, I will not fear what Man can do unto me, Pſal. 118. 6. 124. 1, 2. When *David* ſpent many Verſes, in recounting what makes Nations flouriſh in Men's Eſteem; and concluded, *Happy is the People which are in ſuch a Caſe*; he corrects himſelf in the laſt Words, yea, *Happy is that People whoſe God is the Lord*, Pſal. 144. ult. They *chiefly*, nay, they *only* will be found ſo.

In

In his Hand is Power and Might, ſo that none is able to withſtand him, 2 Chron. 20. 6. as *Jehoſophat* ſtrengthned his own Faith, and the Faith of his People.

And *David* as fully, as excellently: *Thine O Lord is the Greatneſs, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majeſty; for all that is in Heaven, and in Earth is thine. Thine is the Kingdom, O Lord, and thou art exalted as Head above all. Both Riches and Honour come of thee, and thou reigneſt over all; and in thine Hand is Power and Might; and in thine Hand it is to make great, and to give Strength unto all*, 1 Chron. 29. 10, 11, 12.

Safety is of the Lord, as the holy Father *David*, Pſal. 3. 8. and the wiſe *Solomon*, *Prov.* 21. 31. both aſſure us.

Yea, how oft and fully doth *Nebuchadnezar*, an Heathen, acknowledge God's abſolute Dominion, as *God of Gods, and Lord of Kings*, Dan. 2. 47.

His Dominion is an Everlaſting Dominion, and his Kingdom from Generation to Generation. All the Inhabitants of the Earth are as nothing: He doth according to his Will in the Armies of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth; None can ſtay his Hand, or ſay, What doeſt thou, Dan. 4. 34, 35.

How oft doth *David* call him his Strength? And when 'tis ſaid of *Sampſon, his Strength departed from him*; the next Verſe explains it, telling us, *God was departed from him*, *Judg.* 16. 19, 20.

Excuſe my overdoing in ſo plain a Caſe; I muſt ſuppoſe they have no Bibles, or uſe them not, or believe them not to be God's Word, that need more.

Now to have this *All-ſufficient God* to be with us, and to be *our Sun and Shield, we muſt walk before him, and be perfect*; which I look upon, not as ſpoken to Perſons only, but to *Nations*, becauſe to *Abraham*, to whom God ſaid upon the changing of his Name, and the reaſon of his doing it, *A Father of many Nations have I made thee, and I will make thee exceeding fruitful; and I will make Nations of thee,*

and

and Kings ſhall come out of thee, Gen. 17. 5, 6. He was to be the *Father of the Faithful*, and *all Nations* were to be *bleſſed in him*: 'Tis ſpoke to the Nations then in his Loins. The Lord will be with them that are with him. Hear what *Azariah* ſaid to *Aſa*, when *the Spirit was upon him*, 2 Chron. 15. 2. *The Lord is with you while you are with him. If you ſeek him, he will be found of you; if you forſake him, he will forſake you.* Yea, what God himſelf ſaith, 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. *Him that honoureth me, will I honour; but he that deſpiſeth me, ſhall be lightly eſteemed.* The Lord will *do good to them that are good, and upright in their hearts.* He will be with the good Magiſtrate, as *Jehoſhaphat* told his Judges, 2 *Chron.* 10. 11. and with a good People, as all his Words aſſure them.

I will urge one Scripture more; 'tis *Jer.* 18. 7, 8. *At what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to deſtroy it, if that Nation againſt whom I have pronounced, turn from their Evil, I will repent of the Evil I thought to do unto them.*

And at what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a Nation, and concerning a Kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my ſight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the Good wherewith I ſaid I would benefit them. Let us pauſe here. I confeſs my Infirmity; this Scripture ſtrikes me with horror and amazement.

Never did the Voice of Providence ſpeak more audibly, more diſtinctly, more intelligibly, and more encouragingly, concerning a *Nation*, *to build*, *and to plant it*, than in the late Revolution; and Opportunity not only afford it ſelf, but even preſs'd upon us, to make us *a righteous Nation*, and an happy People; and it may be, never was a Work, in it ſelf ſo hard, rendered ſo eaſie to have been accompliſh'd, had it not been our own fault; and whether it be recoverable, and not paſt remedy, God only knows; and the things of our Peace hidden from us, becauſe we would not know them in the day of our Viſitation.

There

There are many Texts of Scripture have a Black, a Melancholy, *Saturnine* Aſpect upon our Circumſtances; a few of which I ſh point to.

Ezek. 24. 13. *In thy filthineſs is Lewdneſs; becauſe I have purged thee, and thou waſt not purged, thou ſhalt not be purged from thy Filthineſs any more, till I have cauſed my Fury to reſt upon thee.*

When God's Call is entertained with a deaf ear, and his manifeſted expectation fruſtrated and diſappointed; which is our Caſe, if ever it were the Caſe of any Nation under Heaven; then ſurely *this iniquity ſhall not be purged from you till you die, ſaith the Lord God of Hoſts*, Iſa. 22. 14.

Ephraim is joyned to Idols, let him alone, Hoſ. 4. 17. — 7. 8. *Ephraim is a Cake not turned.* *England* is joyned to Profaneneſs and Formality, Dough-bak'd, Cruſted on the outſide with the Form of Godlineſs; but raw within, and cold at heart, as to the Life and Power of it. *O Jeruſalem, wilt thou not be made clean; when ſhall it once be?* Jer. 13. *ult.* Such a State of a Nation God puts himſelf to a loſs what to do, to them, or with them. *O Ephraim, what ſhall I do unto thee? O Judah, what ſhall I do unto thee? Thy Goodneſs is as a Morning-Cloud, and as the early Dew it goeth away*, Hoſ. 6. 4.

The good Lord avert the bad *Omen*, given by our obſtinate Unrighteouſneſs, (the grey hairs of which are already upon us, *Hoſ.* 7. 9. though moſt are ſo blind, they know it not; and none ſo blind as thoſe who will not ſee;) that it be not to us, according to the Folly of our Provocations.

2. Righteouſneſs makes Nations flouriſh, *Removendo prohibens*; by putting a ſtop to, and rooting out thoſe Vices which blaſt, and make them wither? Which it effects, partly, by prevailing upon Men's Conſciences, to ſee the evil of them, and to hate and loath them, be aſhamed of them, and caſt them off with deteſtation, ſaying to them, *Get you hence: Which is the firſt Beſt.*

Partly, While the honest, zealous Magistrate restrains by due execution of Justice, such flagitious Offenders, from polluting the Land, and infecting others: *Which is the next Best.*

That those, whom the Love of God, Themselves, and Country, will not constrain to be good, the Fear of the Sword of Justice may restrain, from being, at least openly, so bad, as their unbridled Lusts would hurry them to be, were that coercive Curb removed.

Such Sins, to instance in a few, which destroy Kingdoms, are,

First, *Whoredom. Give not thy strength unto Women, nor thy Ways to that which destroys Kings*, Prov. 31. 3. When they *neigh after their Neighbours Wives*, like fed Horses, *and assemble themselves by Troops in Harlots Houses*; and to look beyond second Causes, to that God, *the Rod of whose Anger they are*, Isa. 10. 5. What destroyed *Sechem*, and *his City*, but *the Rape of* Dinah, Jacob's *Daughter*: Gen. 34. What brought the *Moors* into *Spain*, but the like Provocation, to revenge it. And what the *Saxons* into *England*.

2ly. *Violent Oppression.* I joyn these Two together, because I find them so, as the only Sins instanced in, which brought the *Flood* upon the *Old World*, Gen. 6. And the other which brought Hell out of Heaven upon *Sodom*, *Jude* 7. the two standing Instances of Divine Indignation, set up to terrifie all succeeding Ages from the like.

So *Drunkenness* and *Riot*, which drown Men in Sottishness, and bereave them of the Force, both of *Mind* and *Body*, their *Reason* and their *Hands* to preserve themselves, and make them *forget the Law, and pervert the Judgment of the afflicted*, Prov. 31. 5. When *Benhadad was drinking himself drunk in the Pavilions, with the Thirty and Two Kings that helped*, a little handful of *Israelites* routed his mighty Army, 1 *Kings* 30. 16.

And when *Belshazzar* was in the like condition, the *Medes* took his City, and slew him.

So

So *Blaſphemous Oaths*, which make a Land mourn.

Pride, and all its Retinue, the Rabble of Vices which are preſs'd to ſerve it; which are not eaſily reckon'd up. See a comprehenſive Place, *Hoſ.* 4, 1, 2, 7. *The Lord hath a Controverſie with the Land, becauſe there is no Truth, nor Mercy, nor Knowledge of God in the Land. By ſwearing, and lying, and killing, and ſtealing, and committing Adultery, they break out, and Bloud toucheth Bloud; therefore ſhall the Land mourn: as they increaſed, ſo have they ſinn'd againſt me; therefore I will turn their Glory into Shame.* Sin ſhall bring them under Reproach; but *Righteouſneſs* promoted, prevents, and roots out, at leaſt, reſtrains theſe; and ſo exalts a Nation, by removing what hinders it, out of the way.

3. It doth it *promovendo adjuvans*, by promoting what greatly contributes to it. All that beautiful Train of Vertues, which are the Ornament, and Eſtabliſhment of Nations, are the *Iſſue*, and the *Offspring* of *Righteouſneſs*, brought forth, or brought up by it. To inſtance in a few;

Diligence and *Induſtry*, which make Families and Kingdoms rich. But who will be diligent, when the more he acquires, the fairer Mark and Prey he is to oppreſſive Violence; from which there is no Juſtice to ſecure and defend him?

Honeſty and *Fidelity*, the great Allurement to Trade and Commerce: For who will deal with Treachery, and Falſhood, where nothing is to be expected but Cozenage, and Fraud?

So *Courage* and *Valour*, which nothing raiſes like a good Conſcience, which is *Murus aheneus*, or guards ſo well as *the whole Armour of God*; a chief Piece of which is a *Breaſtplate of Righteouſneſs*, Eph. 6. *The Righteous are bold as a Lion; but the Wicked fly when none purſue them*, Prov. 28. 1. And at beſt, can be but Fool-hardy, for not conſidering their Danger.

Wisdom, and *Consideration*; which are drowned in Excess and Riot. Vice insatuates Men, and befools them. *Whoredom and Wine take away the Heart*, Hos. 4. 11. and make Sots.

Publick Spiritedness, and a natural Kindness to our Native Land. The Motto of which, is, *Sustine, Abstine*; Bear, and forbear. What is said of Charity, *It beareth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*, 1 Cor. 13. 7. is true of a generous Love of our Country: It will make us bear the Burthens necessary for its Preservation, without murmuring and repining, and will forbear selfish Satisfactions, which are not consistent with the Publick Good; as particular Nature yields, and gives place to universal Nature, for its preservation.

So *Unity* and *Concord*. Piety and Probity are the Centre, and Bands which fasten Men together. *See how they love one another*, used the very Heathens to say of the Primitive Christians. There may be Conspiracy amongst Thieves and Traytors; but true Concord only amongst Righteous Men. The Philosopher observed long since, That *Friendship is only amongst good Men*. 'Tis a Promise of the Covenant of Grace, by which is conveyed all that makes us good; That *God will give them one Heart, and one Way*; *Jer.* 32 39, 41. And then it is added, *I will establish them assuredly; with my whole Heart, and my whole Soul*. A Kingdom divided cannot stand; the Emblem of the Sheaf of Arrows is lively; every single one a Child may snap in sunder; but bound up together, the strongest Arms cannot break them. Religion hath its Name *à Religando*, from binding us to God, and one another: Where the Soul and Substance of Righteousness is duly minded, Men have no leisure to quarrel about its Shadow, and Trimming.

The Time would fail me to enumerate half the Vertues which secure, and beautifie; or Vices, which destroy, and blot a Nation with Reproach. I must leave them both to be suggested by your own Thoughts; all which, prevailing

Piety

Piety and Probity, plant, or root out; lift up the Face of one, and make the others hide their Heads.

4. *Righteouſneſs* exalts a Nation, by furniſhing it with able Men, fit for the Truſts and Employments in which they are engaged; than which, nothing can be deſired, or conceived more conducive to ſo Noble an End. How can that Ship eſcape a Wreck, at the Helm of which is an unskilful, or unfaithful Hand, eſpecially, in ſtormy Weather, or amongſt the Rocks?

Religion extends to all Relations, and will make Men conſcientious in diſcharge of their relative Duties, with the utmoſt Care. They will not dare to undertake them, without, at leaſt, competent Abilities; nor continue in them, without faithful improving thoſe Abilities: Yea, when *Righteouſneſs* is the Air, and prevailing Element of a Nation, the Youth will ſuck it in, in the Nurſeries of Learning; which furniſheth it with Worthy Men in Church and State; which proves an ineſtimable Bleſſing.

5. By rendring the Subjects quiet, and obedient, and ready to ſupport the Government for Conſcience ſake to God, and Gratitude to Men, and from a Senſe of their own Happineſs, they enjoy under it, and an awful Veneration with which that Government affects them, which is managed with Piety and Equity.

For as an harſh and tyrannous Rigour renders it hateful, and an over-remiſs Facility renders it deſpicable, and an encouraging of Wickedneſs, and Vice, renders it abominable to God, and to the Conſciences of all Men;

So countenancing Religion, and diſtributing Juſtice impartially, and yet with Moderation, fills a Nation with Admiration, Veneration, Love, and Good-Will; which, under God, is the beſt Security of Thrones, and thoſe which ſit upon them; and therefore *Machiavel* would have Rulers to be righteous, or at leaſt to ſeem ſo, to charm the People to that Eſteem of them, which is neceſſary for the Safety of themſelves, and Countries.

6. As

6. As Righteousness renders the Government easie and belov'd at home, so secure from abroad; which two fill both the Pages of a People's Wishes.

Now it secures a Nation, by preventing unjust Quarrels, and provoking needless Troubles from Neighbouring Nations. Those Governments which have extinguished all differences of Good and Evil, Right and Wrong, who are under no Law of God or Nations, but their own Will and Power, who are always watching Advantages to prey upon their weaker, or less suspicious Neighbours: Such in God's just Judgment oft bring Ruine, or sore Troubles upon their Countrey. They that *travel with Iniquity, conceive Mischief, and bring forth Falshood, dig and make Pits for others, fall into the Ditch that they made; their Mischief returns upon their own Heads, and their violent dealing upon their own Pate*, Psal. 7. 14, 15, 16.

The unrighteous Aggressors meddle to their own hurt, and reap nothing but the Shame of being treacherous, and the Vengeance with which a just God repays it. We might give abundance of instances from History, and not a few of recent Date; besides what roar'd so loud from *Vienna*; and since upon the *Turks*, in invading the Empire, during the not expired Truce. But the Scripture-instances of *Ahab*, who might have liv'd quietly at home; but at *Ramoth Gilead*, where he was, the Aggressor died by an Arrow of God's own guiding, 1 *Kings* 22. 34. And especially of *Amaziah*, who had ruled well and prosperously, when he fell into *Idolatry*, 2 *Chron.* 25. 14. and despised Admonition, *v.* 15. God left him to himself, *v.*20. to pick an unjust Quarrel with his Neighbour, *Joash* King of *Israel*.

To whose wise and friendly Counsels of Peace, when he had proudly and obstinately refused to hearken, he routed his Army, took him himself Prisoner, broke down the Walls of *Jerusalem*; and brought his Kingdom to such distress, as was scarcely ever known to overwhelm it: All which had been prevented, had Righteousness prevail'd to keep him quiet.

7. Lastly,

7. Laſtly, To paſs by many more Advantages, it gives a Nation Reputation, that all their Neighbours are affraid to moleſt them.

If thou wilt keep the Commandments of the Lord thy God, and walk in his Ways, all People of the Earth ſhall ſee that thou art called by the Name of the Lord, and they ſhall be afraid of thee, Deut. 28. 9, 10.

Yea, make them court their Friendſhip, and ſeek their Alliance; *When a Man's ways pleaſe the Lord, he maketh his Enemies to be at Peace with him*, Prov. 16. 7. and that ſutable Paſſage, Zech. 8. 28. *Ten Men*, a number of Perfection; that is, very many *of all Languages of the Nations, ſhall take hold of the Skirt of one that is a Jew, ſaying, we will go with you, for we have heard that God is with you.*

These are a few of the Reaſons why, and Means by which Righteouſneſs exalts a Nation, makes it flouriſh, and ſets it up in Honour, Safety, Plenty, and in all deſirable Proſperity; and are in Truth, comparatively, but a taſte and ſprinkling, but one Cluſter of Grapes, ſuch as the Spies brought from the Brook of *Eſhcol*, Numb. 13. 23. to ſhew what Fruits a Land of Righteouſneſs brings forth for its Inhabitants.

But on the contrary, Unrighteouſneſs, Iniquity, and Sin pull down upon any People all God's Curſes; and where they prevail, *The Vine* of that Land *is the Vine of Sodom, and of the Fields of Gomorrah; the Grapes are Grapes of Gall, their Cluſters are bitter; Their Wine is the Poiſon of Dragons, and the cruel Venom of Aſps.*

And now, Right Honourable, much honoured, and well-beloved in our Lord, I humbly beg your leave that I may, and your Patience whilſt, I endeavour to make a free impartial improvement of what hath been delivered, in a ſeaſonable Application.

I ſhall diſpatch it in two Uſes.

1. Information.
2. Exhortation.

Firſt,

First, By way of Information. If Piety, Equity, and Honesty exalt a Land, its People and Government, in Honour, Safety, Plenty, render it prosperous and flourishing. Let me draw these Four instructive Inferences.

1. Let us learn hence who are the most faithful to their Country's Interest, and the truest Friends to Government, righteous, religious, just, sober, upright, honest Men; or profane, godless, unjust, debauch'd, fraudulent, dishonest ones.

A Man would think it impossible to err, in making Judgment in so plain a Case: For surely they are better Friends who do it good, than they that do it mischief; they that hold it up, than they that pull it down; they that engage God to be its Defender, than those who provoke him to become its Enemy; they that serve it, than those who serve themselves of it.

And yet, however it comes to pass, never was poison'd Weapon so constantly made use of, as this; I say, as this against the best and honestest of Men, that they were not Friends to *Cæsar*, true to their Country's Interest and Government.

That it should be thus very frequently, is not unaccountable nor need it seem strange, if we consider that most Governments have been idolatrous, licentious, wicked; and as the most are the worst, the Community too ready to comply with them, and applaud them as being like them, and making their corrupt advantage of them. Those who could not do so, but shewed the most innocent dislike, and most modestly bewailed, or reproved what they saw amiss, were stigmatized and branded with this hateful Character, as Enemies to the Publick, as the most swinging Revenge they could take of them, as exposing them to the greatest Hate and Danger.

Thus it fared with *Noah* in the old World.

And thus was *Lot* treated in *Sodom*, because his righteous Soul was vexed with their Abominations, and could not

not comply; and becauſe he diſſuaded them from an Abomination, not to be named, as modeſtly and kindly, as the oylieſt Words could expreſs it, *I pray you, Brethren, do not ſo wickedly*, Gen. 19.7. they reproach him as a buſie malepert aſſuming Fellow, which muſt needs be, forſooth, a *Sodom*-mender, *This Fellow came in to be a Sojourner, and he will needs be a Judge; therefore will we deal worſe with thee than with them.* Gen. 19. 7.

Thus it fared with *David* amongſt *Saul*'s Sycophants; though he ventured his Life far, and wrought ſuch great Salvations for his People, and was ſo innocent beyond Exception, that *Saul* was conſtrained, more than once, to acknowledge him more righteous than himſelf. The Land of *Iſrael* was too hot for him; and he found more ſhelter amongſt the Philiſtins, whoſe Champion he had ſlain, than in his own Countrey; for the ſake of which, he put his Life in his Hand, and ventured the Combat in which he ſlew him.

Eliah was the Troubler of *Iſrael*, though in Truth the Chariots and Horſemen; and *Jeſabel* muſt have his Head.

And holy *Jeremiah*, the beſt Man then alive, *muſt dye as one, who ſought not the Welfare of his People, but their Hurt*, Jer. 38. 4. and King *Zedekiah* himſelf had much ado to ſave him.

The Time would fail me to tell you of *Zacharias* the Son of *Jehojadah*, of *Iſaiah*, *Daniel*, *Amos*, whoſe Words the Land could not bear; and of all the Prophets, and Old Teſtament Saints, of which *Hebrews* the 11th gives ſo large an Account: And they of the New Teſtament ſped no better; 'tis more than petty Treaſon in *John Baptiſt*, to tell *Herod*, 'twas unlawful to have his Brother's Wife, and his Head muſt pay for it. Our Bleſſed Lord himſelf, was accuſed for ſpeaking againſt *Cæſar*, *Perverting the Nation, and forbidding to give Tribute to Cæſar*, *St.* Luke 23. 2. So impudent was their Malice, to lie in a Matter of Fact, when he had vindicated *Cæſar*'s Right in ſet conference with them,

and bid them give *to Cæsar the things which were Cæsars*; Mark. 12. 17. and wrought a complicated Miracle to pay him Tribute: Mat. 17. 27. Nay, *Pilate* himself was bugbear'd into the Murther of the Lord of Glory, by this Weapon, *If thou let this Man go, thou art not Cæsar's Friend.* Joh. 19. 12.

When *Tertullus* the Orator was hired to accuse St. *Paul*, that elect Vessel, he could find no ranker Poison, in which to dip his venal Tongue, than, *We found this Man a pestilent Fellow, and a Mover of Sedition*, Acts 24. 5. And his Fellows, the Holy Apostles, were shot at with the like invenom'd Arrows. And the Primitive Christians, because they could not swear by *Cæsar's Genius*, or offer Incense to his Statue; though they prayed for him most zealously, obeyed him most loyally, in all things consistent with their obeying God, and lived most innocently and usefully among their Fellow-Subjects; yet were esteemed no better than Traytors and Rebels, and common Enemies of Mankind: But I hope better things now.

The Second *Inference*: If Righteousness exalt, and Sin reproach a Nation: They take wrong Measures, and give others false aim, who think the carnal Policy of conniving at Men's Unrighteousness, and humouring them in their Lusts; and winking them, by laying the Reins of their Wickedness loose upon their Necks, lest they grow turbulent and kick, if they feel the Curb or Spur, is the only way to settle a Nation, and secure its Interest, in Honour, Safety, Peace. Surely this is to build with untempered Mortar; and the Wall, so built, will fall, and overwhelm those, who vainly hoped to be sheltred and defended by it: For God hath said; *Let Favour be shewed to the Wicked; yet will he not learn Righteousness: In the Land of Uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the Majesty of the Lord.* Isa. 26. 10.

3. We may hence conjecture, yea foresee, what is like to be the Fate of Nations, according to the Prevalency of Righteousness or Sin, in the midst of them; 'tis in proportion like to be with People, as with Persons. *Say*

Say to the Righteous, it ſhall be well with them; for they ſhall eat the Fruit of their Doings. Say to the Wicked, it ſhall be ill with them; for the Reward of his Hands ſhall be given him. Iſa. 3. 10.

The Words of *Micah* are ſo appoſite, and ſo very awakening, that I cannot forbear tranſcribing them; hoping you will conſider from ſo great a Prophet, what you would not mind from ſo mean a Speaker.

I am full of Power by the Spirit of the Lord, and of Judgment, and of Might, to declare unto Jacob his Tranſgreſſions, and to Iſrael his Sin. Micah 3. 8. *Hear this, I pray you, ye Heads of the Houſe of Jacob, and Princes of the Houſe of Iſrael, that abhor Judgment, and pervert all Equity,* v. 9. *They build up Zion with Blood, and Jeruſalem with Iniquity,* v. 10. *The Heads thereof judge for Reward, and the Prieſts thereof teach for Hire, and the Prophets thereof divine for Money: Yet will they lean upon the Lord, and ſay, Is not the Lord among us? None Evil can come among us,* v. 11. Now comes their Doom: *Therefore ſhall Zion for your ſakes be plowed as a Field, and Jeruſalem ſhall become Heaps, and the Mountain of the Houſe, as the high Places of the Foreſt,* v. 12. Such Vengeance will a righteous God, ſooner or later, cauſe to overtake unrighteous Nations.

4. See what an infinite Advantage it is, to have Righteouſneſs flouriſh, and righteous Men advanced into Authority, who may by their Example bring it into Reputation, and by their Power encourage and protect it: And *è contra*; *When the Righteous are in Authority, the People rejoice: But when the Wicked beareth Rule, the People mourn*: And good reaſon they have to do ſo, if they love their Countrey, and my Text be Scripture.

Secondly, For Exhortation, 1. In general to all. 2. In particular to thoſe concern'd on this ſolemn Occaſion.

In general, I beſeech you all in the Bowels of Chriſt, who ſhed his Bloud to *redeem us from iniquity, and to purchaſe to himſelf a peculiar People zealous of good Works,* Tit. 2.

14. Which he hath appointed us to walk in: Yea, I require, and charge you in the Name of the Great, the Righteous, and the Dreadful Judge of Quick and Dead, to whom we muſt all ſhortly give an Account; yea, I adjure you, by all that's dear to you, and may be moving with you, as *Men*, as *Parents*, as *Engliſh-men*, as *Chriſtians*, as *Reformed Chriſtians*; as you love and deſire the Proſperity of your *Souls*, your *Families*, your *Native Country*, the *Government*, under which you enjoy ſo many Comforts, your *Church*, your *Holy Religion*, which is our Glory; By all theſe, and by whatever elſe may be named, or thought on, that you love, practiſe, and promote with your utmoſt Induſtry and Zeal, in your *Perſons*, *Families*, *Neighbourhood*, and *Nation*, univerſal, unreſerved *Righteouſneſs*, *Piety*, *Equity*, *Honeſty*, every one in your Places and Capacities: This is *Totum Hominis*; the Summ of your Duty, Buſineſs, Happineſs; Abſtain from all Evil, Name and Thing, Act and Appearance. Let not *Impiety*, *Iniquity*, *Diſhoneſty*, *be ſo much as once named among you, as becometh Saints*, Eph. 5. 3. unleſs with deteſtation and abhorrences *Ver.* 11. And *have no Fellowſhip with any unfruitful Works of Darkneſs, but reprove them rather*: And *follow after Peace with all Men, and Holineſs, without which none ſhall ſee God*, Heb. 12. 14.

Ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well; awake to Righteouſneſs, and ſin not: Iſa. 1. Yea, *Die to Sin, and live to Righteouſneſs*, 1 Cor. 15.

Deny all Ungodlineſs, and worldly Luſts, and walk righteouſly, ſoberly, and godly in this preſent World, Tit. 2. 11. Giving to God, thy Neighbour, and thy Self, what's due to every of them, with a Conſcience void of offence to all. And this is the Way, the only ſure Way, to ſave thy Soul from the Wrath to come, and your Selves, and *dear Poſterity*, your *dearer Countrey*, your *Church*, and *Religion*, which ſhould be *deareſt* of them all; from the threatning Dangers, and impending Storm which our mighty Sins have gathered into ſo dark a Cloud, ſo ready to break, and

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to diſcharge it ſelf upon our guilty Heads: Without this, all will ſucceed ill, were our Armies as numerous as thoſe of *Xerxes*, or *Senacherib*, and all as valiant, and daring as their Royal Leader; our Fleet as gallant as that which conquered at *Lepanto*; our Sinews of War, a Fund as inexhauſtible as the Ocean; and the Arm of Fleſh as ſtrong as *Hercules*, or *Samſon*, or you can wiſh, or fanſie; all will dwindle, and melt, and vaniſh into nothing, if God blow upon us, or *hide his Face.* And the Prophet *Iſaiah* hath told you, *Iſa.* 59. 2. That your *Iniquities* perſiſted in, and *Sins* unrepented of, will make him do it.

But ſome will ſay, What would you have us do? *The Flouds of ungodly Men make us affraid*, Pſal. 18. 4. *He that departeth from Evil, makes himſelf a Prey*, Iſa. 59. 15. Our very Remedy is turned into our Diſeaſe; Religion, which ſhould help us, is turn'd againſt it ſelf; and the Form of it combats againſt the Power, almoſt as dangerouſly as an open Enemy. *Omnia cùm liceant, non licet* (*impunè*) *eſſe pium. If the Foundations be removed, what can the Righteous do? Pſal.* 11. 3. I'll tell you as plainly as I can.

Firſt, Take heed of Hypocriſie, and overweening Affectation of Singularity. *Phariſaical Cenſuring*, and *Deſpiſing* others, *Luke* 18. 9. and ſaying, *Stand by thy ſelf, I am holier than thou*, Iſa. 65. 5. Make not things worſe than they are; nor brand every one thou fanſieſt not to be thy Friend, as an Enemy of God; nor the ſincere Devotions of others, to be meer Formalities, becauſe they would be ſo in thy ſelf, if thou ſhouldſt uſe them with thy preſent Principles, and Prejudices.

Secondly, Be not diſcouraged to do thy Duty, becauſe others neglect theirs; not ſcar'd from promoting Righteouſneſs, by the reproach of Singularity. 'Tis better to be righteous alone, than wicked with the greateſt company, or in company of the greateſt. Conſider what our Lord's Interrogatory implies; *What do ye more than others?* Mat. 5. 47. Remember there is a Praiſe-worthy, as well as a

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Blame-worthy affected Singularity. If others will not do their Duty to ſave a Nation, let not that hinder thee from doing thine: *Let them return to thee; but return not thou to them*, Jer. 15. 19. There is nothing of which the Scripture gives more ſignal Inſtances, than the beſt Men ſtanding ſingle, and alone in their Places and Generaaions. *Noah*, *Job*, *Abraham*, and *Moſes ſtood in the Gap*, to turn away Wrath from *Iſrael*. *Joſeph*, *Elijah*, *I am left alone*. *Micaiah*, *Daniel*, *Few find the narrow Way*, Mat. 7. 14. St. *Paul*, *Athanaſius*, &c.

2. Be exhorted therefore to mourn, at leaſt, for all the Abominations in the midſt of us; as thoſe good Souls did, *Ezek.* 9. 4. and God will ſet his Mark upon thee; and if thou canſt not deliver a Nation, *no nor Son, nor Daughter, thou ſhalt however deliver thy own Soul*, Ezek. 14. 20.

3. Cry mightily to God to pardon thy own, and the Nation's Impiety, Iniquity, Improbity, and with an holy and pathetick vehemency, call to Heaven and Earth in *Iſaiah*'s Words, *Chap.* 45. *ver.* 8. *Drop down, ye Heavens, from above, and let the Skies pour down Righteouſneſs: Let the Earth open, and let them bring forth Salvation; and let Righteouſneſs ſpring up together:* And ſue out thoſe gracious Promiſes that God hath made to his Church, concerning Righteouſneſs, yet to be fulfilled; to haſten their Accompliſhment: Such as theſe, amongſt many. *I will reſtore thy Judges as at the firſt, and thy Counſellers, as at the beginning; afterwards thou ſhalt be called a City of Righteouſneſs, the faithful City*, Iſa. 1. 26. *In Righteouſneſs ſhalt thou be eſtabliſhed, and ſhalt be far from Oppreſſion*, Chap. 54. 14. *I will make thy Officers Peace, and thine Exacters Righteouſneſs*, ch. 60. 17. – ver. 21. *Thy People alſo ſhall be all righteous.* And pray down that *New Heaven, and New Earth, wherein Righteouſneſs ſhall dwell*; which we expect, and St. *John ſaw deſcending*, 2 Pet. 3. 13. Rev. 21. 1.

II. The Second Branch of the Exhortation I ſhall direct to all concerned in the ſolemn Buſineſs of the Day; Plaintiffs and Defendants, Counſellers and Pleaders, Jurors and Witneſſes. I beſeech, and warn you, to do all you do, ſay all you ſay, as in the ſight and hearing of him who judgeth righteouſly, and will render to every Man according to his Deeds: *All whoſe Ways are Judgment, a God of Truth, and without Iniquity; juſt and right is he*, Deut. 32. 4.

And if we muſt give an Account *for every idle Word at the Day of Judgment*, Mat. 12. 36. how much more for every falſe, malicious, ſcornful Word, ſpoken before a ſacred *Tribunal* of *Judgment*? Briefly,

1. Do to others, as you would others ſhould do to you. None of you would be falſly witneſſed againſt, ſworn out of your Eſtates, Lives, Liberties, by a falſe Oath, or have advantage taken of your Ignorance, or Weakneſs, to oppreſs you in Judgment, or be run down by Noiſe and Clamour? Do not ſerve others ſo.

2. Do as Conſcience will do by you at that Tribunal whither you are haſtning; that will then ſpeak the Truth, the whole Truth, and nothing but the Truth. Let that guide you, not Favour, nor Affection, Love, or Hatred, Faction, or Partiality, Expectation of Reward, or Fear of Revenge.

Laſtly, Let me, without imputation of indecent Rudeneſs, or immodeſt Boldneſs. My *Right Honourable Lords*, the *Reverend Judges*, be your Remembrancer, not to inſtruct you in your Duty; which you know much better than I can teach it; but to encourage you to perſiſt in the performance of it.

As the Nations Happineſs abſolutely depends upon the flouriſhing of Righteouſneſs, and its *flowing down as a mighty Stream*; ſo the promoting of Godlineſs and Piety, Juſtice and Equity, Honeſty and Probity, doth much depend upon your Love to them, Zeal for them, and Courage to execute true Judgment with Impartiality and Truth.

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The Motives to it, are ſo many, and ſo cogent, I have neither need, nor time to reckon them up; I only beſeech you always to carry them with you, and often to reflect upon them.

One is inſtead of all; which I ſhall repeat in the Words of the good and great *Jehoſhaphat*, 2 Chron. 19. 6. *Take heed what you do; for you judge not for Man, but for the Lord, who is with you in Judgment.* Ver. 7. *Wherefore now let the Fear of the Lord be upon you; take heed, and do it; for there is no iniquity with the Lord, nor reſpect of perſons, nor taking of Gifts; thus ſhall you do faithfully, and with a perfect heart.* Ver. 10. *And what Cauſe ſoever ſhall come to you of your Brethren, between Bloud and Bloud, Law and Commandments, Statutes and Judgments, you ſhall warn them that they treſpaſs not againſt the Lord, and ſo Wrath come upon you, and upon your Brethren: This do, and you ſhall not treſpaſs.* Ver. 11. *Deal courageouſly, and the Lord ſhall be with the Good.*

Franciſcus Alverius writes of ſome *Æthiopian* Judges, who ſate upon the Foot-ſtool of their Chairs, leaving the Seat empty for God, or Angels to ſit in.

And *Plato* tells us, That Judgment uſed to be adminiſtred near the Temples, that the Reverence of the Deity might bend the Judges Mind to the doing of Juſtice; and I humbly hope, this taking the Pulpit in the way to the Bench, may have the like Effect: *Amen.*

FINIS.

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